



LESSON 104

I seek but what belongs to me in truth.

Sarah's Commentary:

Isn't it interesting how we spend our lives seeking for happiness, wanting to be free of conflict, wanting peace, joy, and love, not knowing we already have within us everything we seek? Why are peace, love, and joy not consistent experiences in our lives? The answer is that we are constantly choosing against what is in our own best interests. We continue to side with the ego that tells us our lot in life is to suffer because we have sinned against God, and thus we don't welcome the love and peace given to us. **"They are not welcomed gladly by a mind that has instead received the gifts it made where His belong, as substitutes for them."** (W.104.1.5) We make plans and goals, believing they will bring us the happiness we seek; but, instead, all they offer is more guilt and pain, which reinforces our belief that we are separate from God. The ego urges us to keep seeking for substitutes for God, but these substitutes will never satisfy us. They are **"all meaningless and self-made gifts"** (W.104.2.1) that we have put in the place where God's gifts await our acceptance. The only thing that will fill the emptiness we try to fill with idols in the world is the experience of the love we are.

Imagine having everything you believe is important in your life. You have all the money, all the power, all the recognition, and everything you have sought in the world. Yet if you lack real contentment, real peace, and real joy that wells up from deep within, then what do you really have? The things of this world we strive for will never fulfill us. With our focus on our perceived needs as we define them, we resist God's gifts. In fact, we are afraid of them. But everyone eventually comes to the recognition that the things we have made to substitute for His gifts do not deliver on their promises. Does this mean we must give up our cherished goals? No. As long as we still value them, to give them up is to sacrifice what we think we want. My experience is that as I withdraw the value I have placed on them, they just drop away. This has come with the recognition that I really do not know my own best interests, and therefore, I have no idea where my happiness lies.

This Lesson reminds us that as long as we clutter up the holy place within our minds with our own "gifts," there will be no room there for us to discover the gifts given to us by God. **"Yet must there be a place made ready to receive His gifts."** (W.104.1.4) **"We clear a holy place within our minds before His altar, where His gifts of peace and joy are welcome, and to which we come to find what has been given us by Him."** (W.104.4.2)

How do we do it? He instructs us to: **"Lay aside the conflicts of the world,"** (W.104.3.4) which are all those things that clutter the holy inner altar, including our secret sins, our guilt, shame, fear, sadness, desires, specialness, and unworthiness; Choose to have His gifts **"... in place of what we made."** (W.104.3.1); Recognize our will is the same as God's. We truly want the same thing as He wants for us. Therefore, we must **"... unite our will with what God**

wills, and recognize the same as being one." (W.104.3.1); And finally, affirm joy and peace as are our inheritance, given to us ". . . before time was, and that will still be ours when time has passed into eternity." (W.104.2.3)

We have always had these gifts. Jesus said, "Before Abraham was I am." Like the words of the song: "I am as I am, as sent me," we have always been. Nothing we can ever do can change the truth of who we are "as sent me." We are not actually sent anywhere, but we appear to be here when we are actually at home in God. The Atonement principle affirms that we can't change the truth about the Self we are, although we can stay unaware of this truth as long as we choose. When we are ready, and only then, will we open our hearts and minds to this truth. We need to give it welcome. It will never be thrust on us. We need to loosen our commitment to our way and recognize that there truly is a better way. What is needed is a willingness that comes only when we see that our way does not work, and we finally admit we have been wrong about who we are and where our happiness lies.

If these gifts of love, true freedom, and eternal life are with us now, what Jesus is telling us is that we don't have to wait for them, which is contrary to what the ego tells us. The ego says that God's love is in the future, and we must suffer and atone for our sins to receive the gifts of Heaven in the hereafter. Thus, we believe we have to pay the price first by cleaning up our act. Clearly, this is not what Jesus is teaching us in the Course. It is our fear that is keeping us from God's Love. We can choose to have His gifts now in the place of what we have made; but as long as we think that we need our pain, our anger, our depression, and our own way, believing that it will buy us something of value in the future, we are actively choosing against these gifts. Our investment in fear, suffering, and specialness is what we must look at with great honesty.

Jesus says that nothing belongs to us except peace and joy. Our other seeming possessions are nothing. When we realize we have our natural inheritance, ". . . **we would wish for nothing else for nothing else belongs to us in truth.**" (W.104.4.4) What else could we want? Why would we want to suffer? There is no need to seek for what we have already. We don't consistently experience the gifts of God because what we have made in this dream has taken the place of these gifts. Yet we can reclaim them anytime we choose by clearing the way for them through forgiveness. Once we do, peace and joy extend through us.

We have all probably experienced at some time in our lives being in a room with someone who radiates joy and peace. I remember my first and only visit with Chief Dan George many years ago. I had read about him prior to our meeting, and he was a hero to me. I was very excited about meeting him and very nervous. Yet as he held both my hands while I knelt in front of the chair where he was sitting and he looked into my eyes, I dissolved into tears. It was a beautiful joining where there was no need to fill the space with words. He just radiated such peace and certainty about who he is. It was an unforgettable moment I will forever treasure because it was a turning point early in my life---I recognized what it was I wanted to find in myself.

This kind of connection can be so deeply intimate and powerful that it can bring up fear. We fear this kind of intimacy because we are invested in defending against it. We work to maintain our boundaries. We want to maintain our separation where we feel safe. Recognizing the discomfort of this kind of intimacy is a demonstration of how much we fear love. We believe our safety lies in separation. We are uncomfortable in the face of such a deep level of intimacy. Yet each time we join in peace and love, we experience His presence, which offers a beautiful gift of healing. Each time we are in the presence of the Christ, we are reminded what we are---One Self united with our Creator, all the same, with no separate interests. "**I seek but what belongs to me in truth,**

and joy and peace are my inheritance." (W.104.3.3) When we let down the seemingly protective guard, we feel exposed; yet in this, we see into each other in a deep and intimate way.

With all the focus on understanding the Lessons, which is important, of course, we sometimes lose the intent of practice and application throughout the day. Practice is essential if the Lesson is to take hold in our experience. And there is no question---if we are doing the practice as per the Lesson instructions, it takes tremendous vigilance. The extent to which we invest in practice gives us a sense of the extent of our dedication and commitment to the truth at this time in our lives. It also shows us our resistance and fear. We are urged not to fight the ego. It is just another opportunity to look at our fear and bring it to the light.

Do not judge or condemn yourself when you find resistance strong. Just notice it and ask for help to find your way to more willingness. We are asked not to fight ourselves, as this will not release resistance, but in fact, only strengthen it. This is why Jesus demonstrates such patience with us, and we must be patient with ourselves.

Recognize that nothing need change in your world. It is all perfect for your awakening when used as an opportunity to accept and to forgive. All you need to do is choose to release your interpretations of outside events and ask Him to decide for you how to see everything and everyone. Everything is perfect for our awakening when we choose to use our day as a classroom for this purpose. I love how it is said by Jesus, in *The Way of Mastery* by Jon Mark Hammer [Jayem], "I want you to remember that time has been given to you that you might use it constructively. That means when you awaken in the morning, realize that you are in school. You do not have to drive anywhere; you are already there!" Yes, this world is very valuable to us when used as a classroom for undoing the false self.

Everything here is for our own best interests. Today, when I am tempted not to be joyful, not to be peaceful, and to blame others or myself for anything, or think I know what would make me happy, I remember these things have actually only brought me misery. I choose to give up the ego's counsel as to where my happiness lies. Instead, I remember that the only way back to my Self is to continually seek out the Teacher within whose light will shine away my false beliefs and concepts. My part is to bring these false perceptions to the light of His truth, so a space in my mind is cleared for His gifts. If I am tempted to be upset by anything today, I am willing to see that it is my resistance to remembering the truth of what I am. I will not judge the resistance, but I will accept it as a natural response to the progress I am making in my healing. I accept it as a positive sign.

Love and blessings, Sarah
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